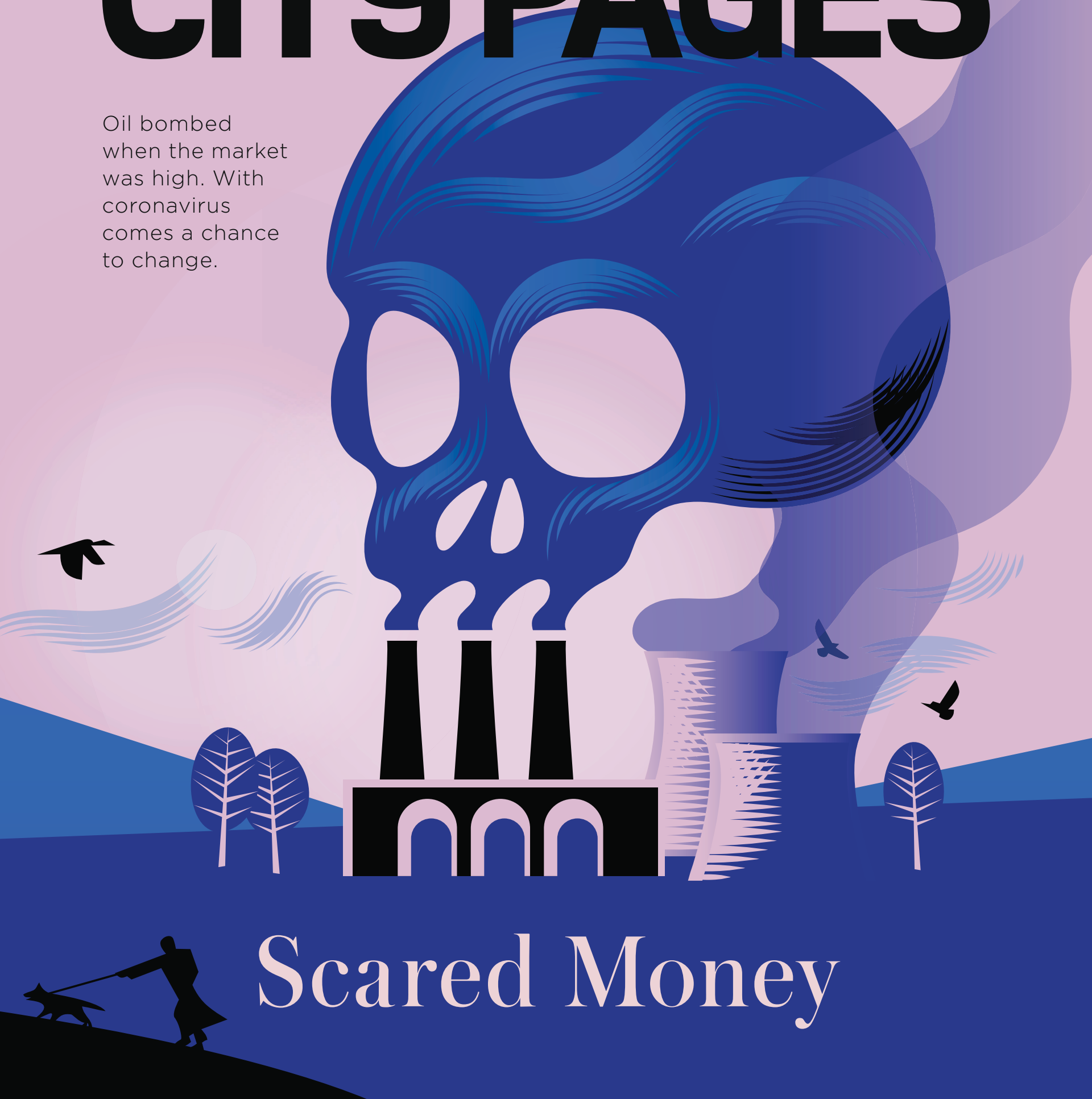


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when the market
was high. With
coronavirus
comes a chance
to change.



Scared Money



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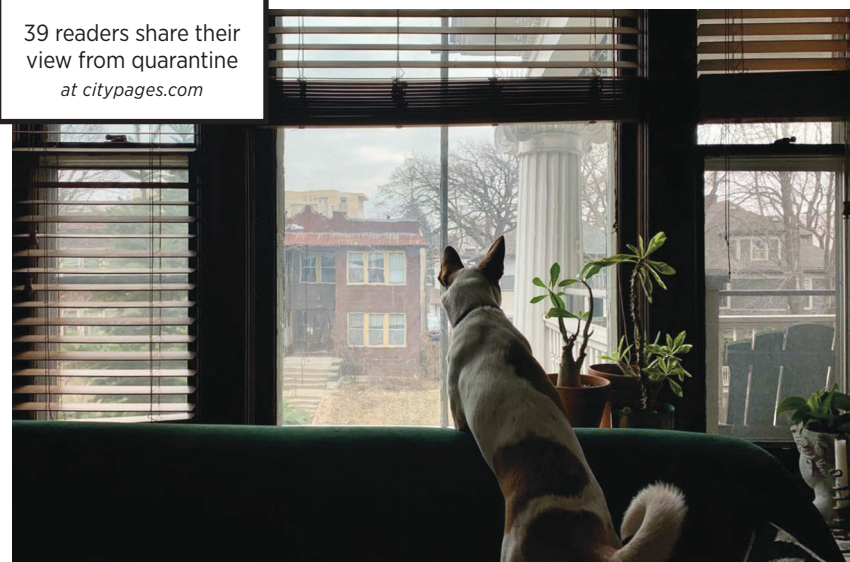
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THE SHORTLIST

39 readers share their
view from quarantine
at citypages.com



SARAH BRUMBLE

THE STAT SHEET

\$51 million

In 2020 road projects just
kicked off in Ramsey County

**\$100
million**

Expected losses expected by the
University of Wisconsin-Madison—
if social distancing ends by June

295

Red Cross blood drives in MN and the
Dakotas canceled by COVID-19, causing
an estimated loss of 9,800 donors

46

Average age of Minnesotans
infected by COVID-19 as of March 31;
average age of fatalities is 86

**“It’s really hard to be the absolute king
of the worst people in a documentary
series about terrible people, but he
somehow makes it look easy.”**

Reader David Reinhart responds to
“This Tiger King star was once sued by
Prince” at citypages.com

ANTIBODY, ANYBODY

SOME HOPEFUL COVID-19 NEWS: The U
of M and Mayo Clinic are close to unveiling
antibody tests that can determine whether
you’ve already been infected by the coro-
navirus. The Star Tribune reports that offi-
cials see these tests as crucial to Minnesota’s
pandemic response, as they could establish
who’s no longer a threat to get or spread
infection and therefore could stop social
distancing and contribute to volunteering.
They’d also provide a more accurate idea
of COVID-19’s fatality rate, since both sick
and healthy folks could get tested.

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WORK STOPPAGE

300,000 unemployment claims filed in Minnesota

We're finally beginning to quantify the effect coronavirus is having on the nation's economy.

A report from NPR didn't sugarcoat it. A record-shattering 3.28 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits in the week ending March 21. The week before, that number was 282,000.

The Labor Department's records go back to 1967, and we're experiencing numbers never seen before. Economist Daniel Zhao told NPR there was little historically we could use to contextualize this moment.

"The coronavirus outbreak is economically akin to a major hurricane occurring in every state around the country for weeks on end," he said.

Minnesota's share of that increase is on the high end of the spectrum. During that record-breaking week, 116,438 of our people officially declared themselves jobless. The week before, it had been 4,010 people. That's a 2,804 percent increase.

According to Forum News Service, more than 300,000 people in the state have applied for unemployment insurance since March 16.

Surprisingly, more than 10,000 of those people are, the Star Tribune reports, health care workers—among them dentists, nurses, doctors, and technical health staff. That's largely due to an order by Gov. Tim Walz to put off procedures deemed minimally invasive or elective, like colonoscopies or minor surgeries.

But the hardest-hit group by far was bar and restaurant workers. CBS reported that 48,540 were laid off in the week before last. They've been out of a job for two weeks due to previous orders limiting service to takeout, drive-thru, or delivery throughout the state.

Things were actually looking pretty good in February. Our unemployment rate (3.1 percent) was down from the previous month—albeit by one tenth of a percent. Over the last year, we'd added jobs in government,



ASSOCIATED PRESS

construction, leisure, and hospitality, and wage growth was up 5.2 percent.

Now there's no telling the extent of the damage, and chances are it will get worse before it gets better. Walz's stay at home order officially went into effect on Friday at midnight. Nonessential businesses—as in companies that don't provide, say, groceries, medicine, or toilet paper—that can't go remote are shut down. Residents are being asked to stay home unless they're on a supply run, seeking medical care, or

out to get exercise.

This is supposed to last two weeks—long enough, hopefully, for Minnesota's health care system to form a plan of attack. An estimated 28 percent of Minnesotans will be left jobless in the meantime.

But as we face this uncertain time ahead, we're being asked to remember the alternative. Last week, Walz reported that researchers estimate some 74,000 Minnesotans could have died if we had done nothing to slow the spread. —HANNAH JONES



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Scared Money

Oil bombed when the market was high.
With coronavirus comes a chance to change.

BY SUSAN DU

I. SICK IN BOOM TIMES

A month ago, as the market rode a lazy 10-year incline and American investors had little concept of the coronavirus carnage to come, a dozen metro-area teenagers carpooled to the state Capitol, bent on getting Minnesota to sell off \$4 billion worth of fossil fuel stocks.

These high schoolers were the core members of the Youth Climate Strike, responsible for convening demonstrations by the thousands on the steps of the Capitol last summer.

Crisscrossing the corridors of the Capitol complex, they flocked into the cramped offices of the governor, attorney general, state auditor, and secretary of state. The four make up the State Board of Investments,

which manages public employees' pensions. At the end of the last decade, they oversaw \$104 billion worth of assets.

The students knew their way well. For weeks they frequented the Capitol, dogging the officials for meetings, and threatening to protest until their demands were met.

"It's important for us not to invest in fossil fuel industries because they're the ones perpetuating the climate crisis," Champlin Park High senior Grace Bassekle said, explaining the moral logic galvanizing the students. "Hopefully it would show the fossil fuel companies that we're done with this BS."

But for the officials, Bassekle has crafted a case for divestment from the impassive viewpoint of fiscal responsibility. For the past 10 years, fossil stocks dragged while the rest of the market soared. Regulation and lawsuits have injected coal and oil with so much risk, it no longer made sense to

bet retirees' futures on their narrowing window to grow.

Bassekle hoped the SBI would heed the dark omens other institutional investors have. "We have to divest now before we suffer the consequences," she says.

Last year, the University of California system announced it would divest its \$13.4 billion endowment and \$70 billion pension—not because of political correctness, but out of concern for its retirees and research.

BlackRock, the largest asset manager in the world with \$74 trillion, issued a piercing open letter to investors in January announcing plans to drop thermal coal because "in the near future—and sooner than most anticipate—there will be a significant reallocation of capital."

CNBC squawker Jim Cramer disavowed fossil fuels as being "on the wrong side of

history," like "a slowly melting ice cube, a wasting asset that will have down revenues unless oil jumps higher and stays higher."

Investment bank Goldman Sachs, followed by JP Morgan, cut off loans for thermal coal and arctic drilling. Goldman also downgraded Exxon Mobil stock from "neutral" to "sell" after analysts forecast the oil and gas giant to have lower than expected returns through 2025.

This all after it's become woefully obvious that America's so-called fracking boom was basically a ponzi scheme.

Determined to shake its addiction to Middle Eastern oil, the United States set off a fracking revolution that flooded the market with supply and suppressed prices. At the same time, because fracking required the nonstop pulverization of shale rock for oil and gas, companies have been directing all their cash flow into drilling



High school students with the Youth Climate Strike spent the last few months before Minnesota's stay-at-home order lobbying the State Board of Investments to sell off coal and oil.

new wells instead of repaying lenders and shareholders.

Last year, Minnesota's SBI commissioned consultant Meketa Investment Group for a general report on divestment issues in response to mounting concern from pension holders and the incessant demands of the Youth Climate Strike. Meketa didn't think dumping fossil stocks was an effective way to control carbon emissions. Yet it acknowledged predictions that peak demand for old energy sources—a potential tipping point for investors—could arrive this decade.

More recently, the International Energy Agency announced that global carbon emissions stopped growing in 2019 even as the world economy expanded 3 percent, thanks to renewable energy.

"These factors pose potential material long-term investment risks to the Minnesota State Board of Investment (SBI) investment portfolio," Meketa warned.

That was then.

By late January, the coronavirus had arrived in America as the World Health Organization declared a global public health emergency. Minnesota had its first coronavirus case in an elderly Ramsey County resident on March 6, a Friday.

At the same time, the Saudi Arabia-led Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) looked at what was happening across the world, predicted demand for oil would tank, and proposed shutting off the taps to salvage prices. Russia pulled a power move and refused to stop pumping. That weekend OPEC doubled down, accelerating its own production and launching a price war.

The following Monday, investors staring into the eye of a pandemic dumped their riskiest assets. Financial markets crashed through the floor with oil leading the plummet. Since then, the price of crude has scraped \$20 a barrel, which would have been unimaginably low less than a month ago.

As coronavirus fixates the world, the clamor in Congress is all about the \$2 trillion economic rescue package passed Friday. In addition to a one-time check

batteries. And when he looks at global economies, he sees civilizations hooked on oil and gas.

Perry is an even-keeled, orthodox financial manager whose long-term approach to investing sees to it that nearly 220,000 retired teachers, law enforcement officers, and civil servants are paid each month. The average pensioner in Minnesota will need those benefits for 30 years. Compared to the manic spikes and valleys of daily markets driven by the 24/7 news cycle,

"The price of crude has scraped \$20 a barrel, which would have been unimaginably low less than a month ago."

of \$1,200 for most Americans and \$500 per child, this historic stimulus includes \$100 billion for hospitals, \$377 billion in small business loans, and \$500 billion set aside for the U.S. Treasury to dole out to any wounded corporation. The news is coaxing back some bargain-hunting investors.

How Minnesota keeps its portfolio balanced in this abrupt recession could have ramifications into the distant future.

II. GOOD INTENTIONS BACKFIRE

When Minnesota's chief investment officer, Mansco Perry III, looks out his Capitol complex window, he sees cars running on internal combustible engines instead of

his outlook is geologic in scale.

He manages this monumental duty by sticking to the dogma of diversification: Buy everything and discriminate against nothing. Follow the market, per the statistically soundest way to make money over lifespans. No vainglorious gambling. No political activism.

Ethics have nothing to do with it, with the exception of three divestment schemes mandated by politicians. State law forbids investing in Iranian businesses subject to federal sanctions as well as arms dealers complicit with genocide in Sudan. The State Board of Investments also divested some funds from Big Tobacco back in 1997, when cigarettes seemed the greatest threat to public health. Nevertheless, the state still owns a heap of Philip Morris shares.

In fact, the SBI owns stock in more than 10,000 companies, everything from Abercrombie and Fitch to Walt Disney, including sweatshop retail, private prisons, and gun manufacturers.

The state doesn't break down how much money it has in coal and oil, but last year the Youth Climate Strike estimated Minnesota managed \$2.6 billion in fossil fuel extraction, or \$4 billion including companies that build the infrastructure that supports the industry. Minnesota owns shares of Chevron, Exxon Mobil, Shell, Enbridge, and more.

It didn't take a financial expert to see energy stocks languishing last decade, but Perry doesn't credit that to a radical shift in car culture. He blames the glut of supply and low prices set by OPEC—both potentially fleeting roadblocks.

As nations come back online after coronavirus, their economies will still hunger for fuel. Rock-bottom oil and gas prices are no good for investors, but cash-strapped consumers would take advantage and have less need to transition to green energy.

And as top fossil fuel companies pour millions into renewables, it makes it harder for SBI director Perry to distinguish between "good" and "bad" energy companies. The cautious approach is to stay invested and weather it out.

"Why would I not continue to own them if they're going to transition themselves from being a fossil fuel-based energy company to a renewable energy company?"

If morality-driven investors sell off their shares, less ethical buyers would scoop them up, explains University of Minnesota economist V. V. Chari. Divestment won't starve companies of capital but could hurt investors, he says.

The cola wars of South Africa offer a lesson from history. As the world grew increasingly disgusted with apartheid in the 1980s, both Coca-Cola and Pepsi announced they would divest from South Africa. Only Pepsi paid more than lip service. After a regime change, Coke was left with a monopoly on the country. Even Nelson Mandela had to put aside his personal boycott of it in pursuit of a greater good—jobs for black South Africans.

In the 1990s, states raised taxes on cigarette companies, forced them to add warnings to packaging, and dumped their shares. All Big Tobacco had to do was move into emerging markets like China and India. While stigma suppressed the rise of small competitors, the giants solidified their market share. Price hikes couldn't dissuade the addicted.

Minnesota won \$6.5 billion by suing a host of cigarette companies in 1998. But it

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also lost money in the stock market—the SBI couldn't say how much—by selling off high-risk, high-reward tobacco shares.

"The coronavirus is having us address climate change in a way that none of us would like, which is crunching our economy, bringing it all to a screeching halt," says Chari. "If this continues for another six months, all types of energy, including green energy, is going to get killed."

Oil companies are calling off plans to expand drilling in 2020. Green energy companies have been flagging from supply chain disruptions as the Chinese factories that made parts for solar panels and wind turbines went dark.

Chari doesn't think there's any reason altering Minnesota's portfolio in favor of green energy would protect returns.

"It may yield a psychic return. You may feel good about it. It may help you sleep at night. But in terms of financial returns, I think that's an illusory hope."

III. LIQUID GOLD WITH NOWHERE TO GO

Years ago Emily Moore, a pension holder and former Minnesota Pollution Control Agency chemist, became aware of a problem with oil futures.

Every quarter, publicly traded companies have to report their assets. For fossil fuel companies, those assets include their reserves of coal and oil, valued with the assumption they'll eventually be extracted and sold.

At the same time, climatologists have reached the consensus that burning fossils would lead to mass extinction. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world has become an average 1 degree C hotter since the industrial revolution. Once warming hits 1.5 degrees C, rising sea levels will displace millions of people, and acidification will eradicate most coral reefs.

At 2 degrees nearly one-tenth of the world will face water shortages, and oceans will lose a quarter of their species.

At 3 degrees the Arctic will have no more sea ice in summer, and the planet will be in drought 10 months of the year.

In the scenario where humanity pulls together and survives, fossil reserves would have to stay buried and go to waste, Moore says. Infrastructure like drilling rigs and pipelines would become obsolete as well.

She and other pension holders presented their case to the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees—a union of state workers—in 2016 and 2017. Both years, MAPE asked the State Board of Investments to study the financial risks of Minnesota's fossil holdings in detail. The teachers union, whose 83,000 members compose the state's second-largest pension fund, requested immediate divestment last year as part of its legislative wishlist. The SBI hasn't buckled to any of those demands.

This problem of "stranded assets" is big enough to shadow the oil industry even after markets bounce back from coronavirus, Moore says.

Centered Wealth financial advisor Jina Penn-Tracy believes the way Saudi Arabia and Russia reacted to coronavirus reveals the extent of their stress over global markets that have been shrinking as advanced societies pivot from carbon.

"The fighting between those players is going to get more intense," she predicts. "I was thinking it would take some time to speed up as the [oil] market gets smaller, but we saw it in hyperspeed because of what happened in the overall economy just now."

When the economy begins to repair itself, America's oil and gas frackers may have a hard time reopening lines of credit, Penn-Tracy says. That's in part because a number of large banks announced they'd stop loaning money for certain drilling projects just before the virus struck America.

While the financing issues that would naturally accompany economic upheaval are poised to hit dirty energy even harder, the industry's international subsidies are suddenly under intense scrutiny as governments look for ways to pay for the coronavirus effort.

Meanwhile, as the virus lifts from China, green energy factories in the east are making a cautious comeback.

"Even as the economy recovers, this asset class is still going to have problems because we still have litigation ahead of us for climate-related disasters," Penn-Tracy says. Countries are spending trillions to overcome the virus. Down the road, they're facing the same unrelenting climate catastrophes that now plague the world perennially. "They're going to need to have somebody foot the bill. I think litigation's going to be on the horizon in a much more intense way than it was six months ago."

While she usually tells her clients to stay invested and engage with morally imperfect companies, Penn-Tracy says no amount of shareholder pressure could urge an oil company to stop drilling for oil, because their mandate is to try to sell the assets on their books.

Last year, Exxon Mobil shareholders proposed getting the oil giant to pace its greenhouse gas output with the Paris Agreement—the international pledge to keep global warming below 2 degrees C. Exxon protested that reducing emissions was basically micromanaging, and wouldn't let shareholders hold a vote.

Nevertheless, big investors keep trying. Year after year, they inundate fossil fuel companies with demands to spare the planet—and shore up shareholder value—by cutting back on pollution. As climate resolutions gain traction, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission proposed curbing shareholders' rights to keep bringing them up. Large and small investors alike objected, and now await the S.E.C.'s final decision.

Shareholders have manifold reasons to worry. Governments keep threatening to enact increasingly strict regulations to throttle production, and lawsuits are bleeding companies dry.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden vows to end fossil fuel subsidies worth tens of billions a year if he's elected. Bernie Sanders, no fan of "corporate welfare," would do the same, ban offshore drilling, and end U.S. export of fossil fuels.

Cautious investors could scrub their portfolios of a huge amount of risk by screening out the world's top carbon reserve holders, divestment advocates argue.

Yet studies offer contradicting insight as to whether portfolios are healthier with or without oil.

A California State University study using market trends over the last 10 years found those who sold off fossil fuels in 2010, when the divestment movement first became vogue in activist circles, are richer for it now.

On the other hand, a study funded by the Independent Petroleum Association of America extrapolated 50 years' worth of market data and found—perhaps predictably—that divestment would be an unimaginably costly mistake.

Yet another study by the University of Groningen, Norway's second oldest college, looked back 72 years and discovered fossil fuels had little effect on well-balanced portfolios. They didn't add that much more variety, particularly as coal and oil had all the risk but none of the reward of "sin stocks" like cigarettes and booze. No one would consume them if they didn't have to.

The University of Minnesota's V.V. Chari agrees there's a good chance "a substantial amount of investments in fossil fuel production and distribution will become stranded."

To predict the future, investors must ask whether the market is doing enough to assess the risks of climate change. Some people take the view that the market is behaving irrationally, and failing to account for stranded assets when valuing fossil companies. In that case, it makes sense from a financial standpoint to offload those assets, Chari says.

"They may be right in the future. It's always hard to tell, but the lessons of history offer a huge caution. If history repeats itself, and it always has, [divestment] will be incurring a significant financial cost," he warns.

IV. A FIGHTING CHANCE

The metastasizing hazards of the fossil fuel industry have members of Minnesota's State Board of Investments on edge. All of their most recent meetings have begun with a discussion of Minnesota's continued investment in dirty energy.

The governor, attorney general, auditor, and secretary of state have the right to change Minnesota's divestment strategy with a vote.



LEILA NAVIDI/STAR TRIBUNE

They each have their own misgivings about carbon's profitability.

"There's a whole field of ethical investing of good stuff that's going to ensure our future and also have a good rate of return," said Attorney General Keith Ellison in an interview. "In the case of fossil fuels, the projections are not that great for them anyway."

"To give you one obvious example, coal companies are going bankrupt across the country. Is it a good idea for Minnesota or anyone for that matter to own those companies?" asked Secretary of State Steve Simon.

Still, it's no small thing for elected officials to defy investing doctrine and blacklist a common asset class. Especially when they're making that call on behalf of hundreds of

Mansco Perry III, executive director of the State Board of Investments, believes there's still time for fossil fuel companies to produce returns for Minnesota's retirees.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ranks Minneapolis as America's second fastest warming city. Increasingly intense flooding has drowned crops in the country and torn up roads in the cities. As pests and parasites move in, native wildlife is vanishing along with the fragile boreal forest ecosystem that defines the state's wild north.

Fossil fuel companies are being sued by Massachusetts and Rhode Island, cities from San Francisco to New York, and an assortment of children's groups arguing their young plaintiffs will suffer the

It's no small thing for elected officials to defy investing doctrine and blacklist a common asset class.

thousands of pensioners. A coronavirus recession only magnifies the significance of their choice.

SBI staff assure the board they're monitoring fossil fuels' increasing regulatory, litigation, and reputational risks. But the board has to be certain.

At their final meeting in March, before coronavirus suspended most in-person government functions, the SBI approved a resolution to commission a comprehensive study of Minnesota's fossil fuel holdings. If the risks outweigh the rewards, they say they'll do what it takes to reduce the state's exposure.

There's another set of factors to consider: Minnesota's own dog in the fight to make fossil fuel companies pay for the damages they've inflicted on the planet.

brunt of climate change. Early subpoenas of Exxon Mobil documents found that its own scientists predicted the planet-killing potential of burning fossil fuels. Nevertheless, the company pumped millions into climate-denial think tanks like the Heartland Institute. Governments are crying fraud.

The Minnesota Attorney General's Office is building a case, Ellison confirmed. Somehow, he'll have to tally the state's climate disasters and put a price on the damage.

When Minnesota boards that bandwagon, it would actively contribute to the avalanche of litigation that threatens fossil investments. But as shareholder, Minnesota pensions would be better off if the companies prevailed in court.

It's a paradox. State Auditor Julie Blaha sees just one way out.

"If fossil fuel companies have pocketed benefits without taking on all of the costs, that's not fair, that's a market failure, and we have to fix that," she says. "It may very well change how we invest."

As coronavirus fans across America, market charts double as polygraphs taking the pulse of the nation's anxieties. Their only hope is the United States' \$2 trillion reboot, and the coronavirus bailouts of governments around the world.

Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, says that amid the despair of inconsolable markets is a historic opportunity to use the downturn in oil—and near-zero interest rates—to invest in green energy.

In recent years, solar, wind, and hydro-power technology have gotten to be so efficient, it's now cheaper to produce a watt of renewable energy than oil and gas. What we need now is sufficient infrastructure—solar and wind farms—to add more of it to the grid and finally round the corner on fossils.

The pandemic's economic effects are likely to be temporary, but the threat of climate change is inescapable, Birol wrote in a statement. The collapse of oil prices poses opportunities for countries to cancel fossil subsidies for good. A green stimulus would bring "twin benefits of stimulating economies and accelerating clean energy transitions," he said.

"The coronavirus crisis is already doing significant damage around the world. Rather than compounding the tragedy by allowing it to hinder clean energy transitions, we need to seize the opportunity to help accelerate them."

Nevertheless, on Thursday the Environmental Protection Agency suspended enforcement of pollution standards during the pandemic, asking companies to regulate themselves.

Then the U.S. stimulus passed without any support for green energy despite congressional Democrats' pleas. In a compromise, the final bill also eliminated the \$3 billion Donald Trump requested to buy 30 million barrels of American crude.

"With the stimulus package, they tried to put some regulations on the airlines, and it didn't happen. Clean energy incentives weren't a part, and they should have been," says pension holder Jean Buckley, a former Ramsey County public health worker. She hopes Minnesota will prioritize protections for its 61,000 green energy jobs in spite of the federal government's neglect of the industry.

"Whatever happens, we're going to have to invest in energy, and our fund should be looking very specifically at what companies are actually investing in clean energy," she says.

"There are a lot of newer startup companies out there and we're all about small businesses, so I think there's a way we can use [environmental] criteria in terms of investing, and not just divesting." ■

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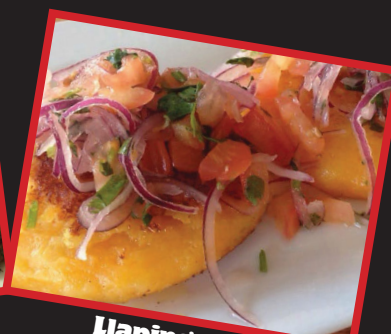
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BY CRAIG UPRIGHT

After living in St. Paul for two decades and moving to Tucson last fall, Bill Lewis and his wife, Deb, returned for a visit to the Twin Cities and saw its food market landscape with fresh eyes.

"Tucson is a city with 500,000 people, but it only has one co-op," Lewis said. "And it's a small one, without much variety or selection." Though they've found local farmers markets to be a source for some items, the bulk of their shopping reluctantly takes place at one of three Whole Foods scattered across the city.

In Minnesota, and especially within the Twin Cities, it is easy to take our vast constellation of food co-ops for granted. The Cooperative Grocers network lists more than 50 in our state, with more than a dozen in the metro area. That not only leads the nation, it's more than twice as many as you'll find in all of California—a state with a progressive reputation, twice our landmass, and six times our population. (Wisconsin, Washington, and New York round out the top four states with the most co-ops, where more than one-third of the nation's co-ops can be found.) Minnesota has more cooperatives than the bottom 25 states combined.

Despite their strong presence in our largest cities, this is not strictly an urban phenomenon. One can find co-ops throughout Minnesota, from Grand Forks to Grand Marais, from Ortonville to Stillwater, from Windom to Winona. And most of them promote themselves as purveyors of local, natural, and organic food.

This is not a recent development, of course. The 1970s was witness to a tremendous amount of organizational zeal on the part of countercultural activists promoting a new ecological consciousness, participatory democracy, and sustainable local economies. One of their legacies became creating a long-lasting institutional framework for their ideologies and ideals: the co-op.

Throughout the next decade many co-ops will celebrate golden anniversaries, marking more than half a century of sorting produce, scooping dry goods from bulk bins, and asking patrons, "Are you a member?"

For most of these stores, memories of their humble beginnings have become part of historical folklore. Memberships were once measured in the dozens; Mississippi Market now boasts more than 19,000 members, and Lakewinds has more than 24,000. Shares were often sold for three or five dollars, but the contemporary one-time fee for

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MARY LEE SHETTEHAUGHE/MINNESOTA DAILY

membership hovers around \$100. For most co-ops in our era, the monthly volunteer commitments—with many shifts spent on the cheese-cutting table or sweeping out coolers—have completely disappeared.

At Winona's Famine Foods—now the Bluff Country Co-op—local lore tells of an after-hours key kept at the local police station, and members paying for their wares by putting money in a cash box buried in the peanut barrel. Such stories are often shared with a hint of nostalgia, a longing for a more innocent time that has slipped away.

The strong growth of cooperative enterprises didn't take place in Minnesota by chance. The unique social fabric of this state first promoted their formation, then allowed them to survive and thrive even after most of the original founders had moved on with their lives, which has given us places like The Wedge + Linden Hills, Seward Community Co-op, and Hampden Park Co-op.

Cooperatives made an impact in our state long before the Age of Aquarius began to dawn, though, and well before J. I. Rodale started promoting organic food in the 1940s. In 1870, Minnesota was among the first states in the nation to adopt legislation recognizing and regulating such business ventures.

These early agricultural cooperatives formed to help individual farmers negotiate with larger for-profit corporations. Rural communities formed consumer cooperatives to address a variety of free-market deficiencies, ensuring that goods could be purchased and services could be provided at fair prices.

In the 1970s, however, this "new wave" of cooperative ventures created a lasting mark on our natural foods landscape by adhering to two longstanding principles of cooperative management. The first is "cooperation among cooperatives." While most of the early stores were interested in selling the same type of product—natural, unadulterated food with minimal packaging and (if possible) grown locally and organically—these were not easy items to procure. Organic food didn't yet exist as a commodity, and the term "organic" itself had no regulatory meaning until Oregon passed a state statute defining it in 1973.

In order to sell these unconventional foods, the cooperatives banded together to create distributing organizations—not just in the Twin Cities, but also in Duluth and Winona. Following the resolution of the now-infamous "Co-op Wars" of 1975-76, these stores created the All Cooperating

Assembly (ACA), a quasi-federation of stores, which allowed them to remain independent while supporting each other's goals and missions.

The second principle embraced by '70s cooperators involves education. As one of the first paid staff members of the ACA, Kris Olsen traveled tirelessly across the state to help even more cooperatives form in the second half of the 1970s. Cooperatives sought to educate both their members and those who had yet to join up, spreading the word not just about local, natural, and organic foodsheds but also about economic alternatives to the capitalist marketplace.

In conjunction, these principles helped create the amazing array of natural food co-ops that help define our state. Cooperatives stem from and support local communities. By providing opportunities for participatory democracy within hyper-local communities, co-ops operate a market without attempting to maximize profit at any cost. They support local foodsheds, and they return excess revenue to their members. Cooperatives offer both an alternative product (however mainstream it has thankfully become) and a different way of conducting business.

As we enter the next half-century of co-ops in Minnesota, many in our midst lament the passing of those golden years. It is easy to critique the growing professionalization of the cooperative, longing for the days when the Seward Coop (spelled as such at the time) was a small corner store where everybody knew everybody else's business. Today's cooperative field still has many of those types of stores (the Hampden Park Co-op comes to mind, along with Spiral Natural Foods in Hastings), as well as the multimillion-dollar ventures where a members-only meeting would have to take place in the Target Center. But considering alternative realities in our country—just one co-op in Tucson, and none in all of Arkansas—we're pretty lucky to have inherited such a vibrant community of cooperators who care so much about the food we love and labor to keep them around for the next generation.

Craig Upright is an associate professor of sociology at Winona State University and a member of the Hampden Park Co-op. Look for his forthcoming book Grocery Activism: The Radical History of Food Cooperatives in Minnesota (University of Minnesota Press) due out in April. See www.groceryactivism.com for more details. [E]



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A LIST

EACH WEEK, City Pages' A-List section spotlights the best happenings in town. But in the wake of COVID-19, pretty much everything outside of the house is canceled. This week, we check in with designers who are making masks to donate to hospitals, and talk to comedians about their weekly livestreams.



LEFT: GETTY; RIGHT: CHRIS STRAUB



FASHION FOR A CAUSE

Local designers make masks for hospitals

BY KARA NESVIG

As people in the Twin Cities continue to practice social distancing and quarantining to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, local fashion designers and clothing producers are putting their skills to good use, making masks for medical professionals who need protection.

As supplies decrease and the number of confirmed cases continues to rise, many local hospital systems have asked for mask donations. "Using fashion for good is something I care deeply about," says designer Laura Fulk. "I've been researching home-sewn masks and making prototypes for the past few

days. I was waiting for the call, and wanted to make sure they were made right." Fulk initially had enough material to make 50 masks, and has ordered more elastic so she can make several hundred. Designer Christopher Straub has also been spending time sewing masks. He donated his first batch, which features a pretty green leaf motif, to St. Francis Hospital in Shakopee. "The first thing that came to mind was, 'What can I do?'" he says. "We're locked at home, things are put on hold. As a creative person, I feel like I have to do something."

Straub originally thought that he didn't have the right materials, but after watching

a video tutorial, he realized that he had everything required to make masks, including 100 percent cotton fabric and elastic.

"There's been such an overwhelming response of people just saying 'thank you,'" he says. "It feels like I'm doing something. I don't want to say I'm saving lives, but I want to do *something*. It feels almost like a war effort."

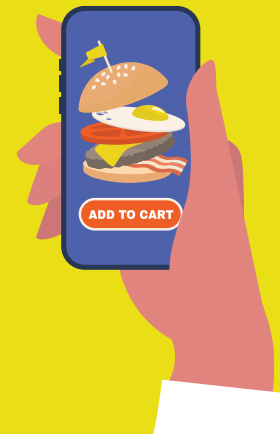
St. Paul's Clothier Design Source, a factory that produces things like cycling and soccer apparel, swimwear, and other items for small brands, as well as local companies like Best Buy and Medtronic, is also taking action to lend a hand.

"We started converting everything over to making masks last Thursday," says owner Mindy Martell. "We're also starting to make isolation gowns. We're hoping to be up to making 6,000 masks a week by next week and trying to get up to 12,000 per week after that." Martell and her 30 employees are all taking part in the effort, from cutting to sewing to quality control.

When she saw the need for supplies, Martell was inspired to act. "One of my best friends is a nurse who works for a hospital, and she is having a lot of anxiety right now," she says. "I've talked to a lot of different nursing departments, and they're like, 'Get me whatever you can get me.' They're scared." The Clothier Design Source crew has gotten creative with its mask-making. "The fiber that we need to put into masks is really hard to get your hands on," she says. "What we're doing is working with hospitals to get their overstock in other products and converting those products into masks."

If you can sew and are interested in helping out, Blue Cross has all the information you need to know online, from approved patterns to donation drop-off sites, as well as organizations to donate to if you can't thread a needle or work a sewing machine. St. Paul's Treadle Yard Goods has been giving out free kits, complete with enough fabric and elastic to make about 28 masks. According to their website, the response has been overwhelming. They're currently working on finding more elastic and should have more kits soon. **CP**

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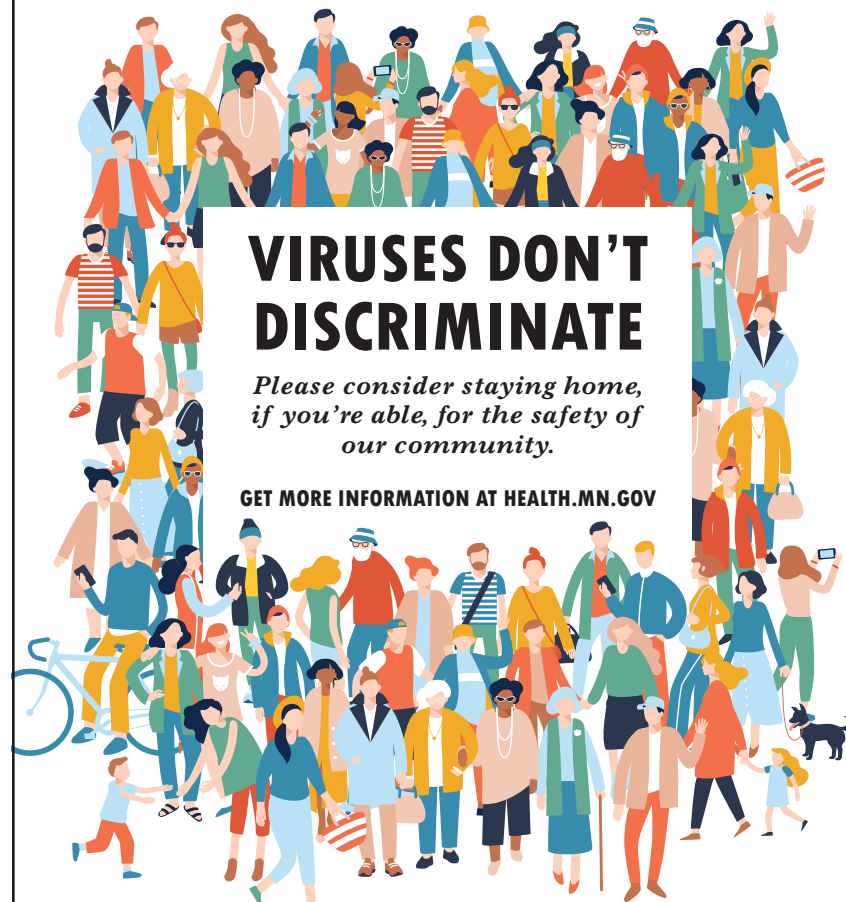
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VIRTUAL LAUGHS

Comedian Ali Sultan keeps comedy alive from a safe distance

BY PATRICK STRAIT

A group of 60 or so comedy fans got together a few Tuesdays ago for a night of standup. At the helm was Ali Sultan, one of the funniest and most enterprising comedians in the Twin Cities.

But fear not, germ police! The entire show was online as part of Sultan's regular (for now) Virtual Distancing Live Open Mic on Instagram. It's been tough to find anything funny about the last couple of weeks. In addition to restaurants, concert venues, and movie theaters, standup comedy was basically leveled overnight because of the coronavirus and social distancing.

"I was terrified that I was going to lose work," says Sultan, who makes his

living exclusively from comedy. "Then I was just terrified of the bigger problem, and losing gigs became irrelevant." Still, Sultan refused to allow comedy to take a sick day. Instead, he got to work using his network of comics from other corners of the world to find a new solution.

"I am from a third-world country, so I am naturally adaptive and resourceful," says the Yemeni American. "I wanted to find a way to talk with other comics and goof around with an audience."

So Virtual Distancing Live Open Mic was born. Hosted by Sultan on his own Instagram (@alisultancomedy), shows feature comics from all over the country performing for a live audience from their

homes. After several successful shows this past week featuring locals like Greg Coleman and Tommy Bayer, as well as comics from New York and L.A. like Usama Siddiquee and Atheer Yacoub, Sultan has committed to hosting a show every Monday night at 8:30 p.m.

"It's like workshoping a bit with another comic, except there are other people watching and commenting," Sultan says of the open mics. "It's not standup. It's a new thing with limitations and some advantages. But overall, it's fun."

Other comics have begun following his lead, creating virtual shows of their own. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., comedian Elizabeth Ess hosts Slay Virtual Open Mic, and at 8 p.m. on Tuesdays, Shyloh Blake

has created This Sucks! A Comedy Hour for the Pandemic. Meanwhile, the Midway Mic open mic with Derek Meyers will continue to take place every Friday night at 9 p.m. until this shit is under control. As for Sultan, he is also beginning to organize themed shows through Zoom to help earn some money for his comedy, and details can be found on his Instagram.

For now, however, Sultan says that he is less worried about stage time, and more about doing his part to get through this incredibly fucked-up situation. "Standup will be back to normal. It's just a matter of when," he says. "It can take months or more. I'm not certain about it, but I'm focused on much more serious things." **CP**

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MUSIC



MADDIE SCHWAPPACH

MY UNEXPECTED FAREWELL TO RADIO K

I accidentally finished my college radio DJ career with
“Yellow” by Coldplay

BY MADDIE SCHWAPPACH

I was scarfing down a Quiznos sub in the Denver International Airport when I found out. An embarrassing streak of sunburn from days of solo hiking held the skin across my nose taut, and a backpack of dirty laundry sat at my feet. I was absentmindedly scrolling through playlists when a chorus of TVs echoed the word “pandemic” through the eerily empty terminal. I didn’t know how, but it was clear in that moment that things were about to change forever. (It’s easy to say that now that they have.)

I winced as I dug through the past few days’ emails. Subject line after subject line began with a no-frills “CANCELED,” and an email from my boss at Radio K told me to start preparing to switch to remote broadcasting.

I’ve spent more hours doing college radio than in the building for my major. I’ve taken naps in my windowless office before working long nights. I’ve cried over breakups in the musty vinyl closet. I’ve stayed up until dawn competing in elaborate Super Smash Bros. tournaments. I’ve made lifelong friends and met my musical heroes in the same

room. I’d already begun curating the mix of songs I’d play during my last shift and rehearsing my closing speech. I was sure I’d cry. After all in-person DJs were called off indefinitely during my last semester at college, it took a couple days to hit me that I might have already broadcast my final moments on air.

In my head, a perfect finale to the hundreds of hours I had spent hunched over dusty jewel cases reading CD liner notes included a balance of the obscure and nostalgic, proof that I had reached the pinnacle of music nerds. It would include stories of basement shows and crate-digging, late-night drives and kitchen dance parties, all my favorite parts about the young adulthood I had been soundtracking weekly in that DJ booth.

In so many ways, I held that final DJ shift as a sort of goodbye to the life I had built in school over the past four years. All the weight I had placed on this should-be-monumental ending hit my chest like an anvil when I realized I wouldn’t have the chance to enact my plans. My last DJ shift had likely passed by on an ordinary

Wednesday morning. I felt frivolous being upset about this objectively minor letdown in the scale of a global crisis, but it was one of the only things I could wrap my head around. I furrowed my brow and dug into my memory, and our station’s playlist archives, searching for any recollection of the unmemorable way my final moments on Radio K had unfolded.

I was nearly late to my last DJ shift. As much as I loved being on the air, there’s a part of the weekly obligation that turns it into a chore in the midst of classes, work, and other responsibilities. It was the day after Super Tuesday and the primaries had my mind in a chaotic state, so I decided that was the day to find the old Coldplay CD and spring “Yellow” on unsuspecting alternative radio listeners. It felt good. I was cackling by myself, posting videos of me shout-singing along, assured that I would be back next week, like always, to do it again.

Playing Coldplay in the all-too-cool college radio airwaves isn’t prohibited, but it’s a sort of “smash glass to push button” type of tool only to be used in times of grave peril. The snarky subtweets and irritated phone calls might come, but for the DJ there’s a serene sort of pleasure in taking everyone out of their current moment. There’s no rule that says you can only do this once in your DJ career, but in my mind that’s how it felt: a sort of holy ritual I was saving for when I needed it. In the midst of a capstone project, surrounded by a tense political landscape, I knew that was the time to pull the trigger.

Of course, I didn’t know what loomed in the coming weeks when I was giggling and singing, “look how they shine fooor you,” and I wouldn’t have gotten to live that moment if I had.

I’ve always tied myself up in ceremonial goodbyes, in curated playlists underscoring the ends of chapters and sentimental journal entries recording lessons learned. With the world switching course in a matter of days, none of us got to mythologize the endings of so many parts of our lives. That was hard for me to cope with until I started remembering moments like that, a private joke with myself that could only be lived if it felt like a passing frame in a story with the ending far out of sight.

This isn’t going to end with some uplifting one-liner about living every day like it’s your last, because for me and the gooey nostalgia I tie to every closing, that’s a little dramatic. I will say, though, that endings sometimes know how to write themselves better than we do, and I’m really glad that one did. **EP**

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Breznysy

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): “If all the world’s a stage, where the hell is the teleprompter,” asks aphorist Sami Feiring. In my astrological opinion, you Aries are the least likely of all the signs to identify with that perspective. While everyone else might wish they could be better prepared for the nonstop improvisational tests of everyday life, most of you tend to prefer what I call the “naked spontaneity” approach. If you were indeed given the chance to use a teleprompter, you’d probably ignore it. Everything I just said is especially and intensely true for you right now.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): When Nobel Prize-winning Norwegian author Knut Hamsun was 25 years old, a doctor told him that the tuberculosis he had contracted would kill him within three months. But in fact, Hamsun lived 67 more years, till the age of 92. I suspect there’s an equally erroneous prophecy or unwarranted expectation impacting your life right now. A certain process or phenomenon that seems to be nearing an end may in fact reinvent or resurrect itself, going on to last for quite some time. I suggest you clear away any misapprehensions you or others might have about it.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): I invite you to remember what you were thinking and feeling around your birthday in 2019. Were there specific goals you hoped to accomplish between then and your birthday in 2020? Were there bad old habits you aimed to dissolve and good new habits you proposed to instigate? Was there a lingering wound you aspired to heal or a debilitating memory you longed to conquer? The coming weeks will be an excellent time to take inventory of your progress in projects like those. And if you find that you have achieved less than you had hoped, I trust you will dedicate yourself to playing catch-up in the weeks between now and your birthday. You may be amazed at how much ground you can cover.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): I can’t swim. Why? There was a good reason when I was a kid: I’m allergic to chlorine, and my mom wouldn’t let me take swimming lessons at the local chlorine-treated pool. Since then, the failure to learn is inexcusable, and I’m embarrassed about it. Is there an equivalent phenomenon in your life, my fellow Cancerian? The coming weeks might be an excellent time to meditate on how to correct the problem. Now excuse me while I head out to my solo self-administered swim lesson at Bass Lake, buoyed by the instructions I got from a Youtube video.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Is William Shakespeare the greatest author who ever lived? French philosopher Voltaire didn’t think so, calling him “an amiable barbarian.” Russian superstar author Leo Tolstoy claimed The Bard had “a complete absence of aesthetic feeling.” England’s first Poet Laureate John Dryden called Shakespeare’s language “scarcely intelligible.” T. E. Lawrence, a.k.a. Lawrence of Arabia, declared The Bard had a second-rate mind. Lord Byron said, “Shakespeare’s name stands too absurdly high and will go down.” His contemporary, the poet and playwright Ben Johnson, asserted that he “never had six lines together without a fault.” I offer these cheeky views to encourage you Leos to enjoy your own idol-topping and authority-questioning activities in the coming weeks. You have license to be an irrepressible iconoclast.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Virgo-born Jack Ma is China’s richest person and one of the world’s most powerful businessmen. He co-founded Alibaba, the Chinese version of Amazon.com. He likes his employees to work hard, but also thinks they should cultivate a healthy balance between work and life. In his opinion, they should have sex six times a week, or 312 times a year. Some observers have suggested that’s too much—especially if you labor 12 hours a day, six days a week, as Jack Ma prefers—but it may not be excessive for you Virgos. The coming months could be a very erotic time. But please practice safe sex in every way imaginable.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): How hard are you willing to work on your most important relationships? How might your life change for the better if you gave them your most potent resourcefulness and panache? The next eight weeks will be a favorable time for you to attend to these matters, Libra. During this fertile time, you will have unprecedented power to reinvigorate togetherness with imaginative innovations. I propose you undertake the following task: Treat your intimate alliances as creative art projects that warrant your supreme ingenuity.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): “I make mistakes,” confessed author Jean Kerr. “I’ll be the second to admit it.” She was making a joke, contrasting her tepid sense of responsibility with the humbler and more common version of the idiom, which is “I make mistakes; I’ll be the first to admit it.” In the coming weeks, I’ll be fine if you merely match her mild level of apology—just as long as you do indeed acknowledge some culpability in what has gone amiss or awry or off-kilter. One way or another, you need to be involved in atonement and correction—for your own sake.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): If you have been thinking of adopting a child or getting pregnant with a new child, the coming weeks will be a favorable time to enter a new phase of rumination about that possibility. If you’ve been dreaming off and on about a big project that could activate your dormant creative powers and captivate your imagination for a long time to come, now would be a perfect moment to get more practical about it. If you have fantasized about finding a new role that would allow you to express even more of your beauty and intelligence, you have arrived at a fertile phase to move to the next stage of that fantasy.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): I suggest you make room in your life for a time of sacred rejuvenation. Here are activities you might try: Recall your favorite events of the past. Reconnect with your roots. Research your genetic heritage. Send prayers to your ancestors, and ask them to converse with you in your dreams. Have fun feeling what it must have been like when you were in your mother’s womb. Get a phone consultation with a past life regression therapist who can help you recover scenes from your previous incarnations. Feel reverence and gratitude for traditions that are still meaningful to you. Reaffirm your core values—the principles that serve as your lodestar. And here’s the number one task I recommend: Find a place of refuge in your imagination and memories; use your power of visualization to create an inner sanctuary.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Are we just being poetic and fanciful when we say that wonder is a survival skill? Not according to the editors who assembled the collection of essays gathered in a book called *Wonder and Other Survival Skills*. They propose that a capacity to feel awe and reverence can help us to be vital and vigorous; that an appreciation for marvelous things makes us smart and resilient; that it’s in our selfish interests to develop a humble longing for sublime beauty and an attraction to sacred experiences. The coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to dive deep into these healing pleasures, dear Aquarius.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): For decades, the city of Sacramento, California suffered from severe floods when the Sacramento and American Rivers overflowed their banks. Residents authorized a series of measures to prevent these disasters, culminating in the construction of a 59,000-acre floodplain that solved the problem. According to my analysis, the coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to plan an equally systematic transformation. It could address a big ongoing problem like Sacramento’s floods, or it could be a strategy for reorganizing and recreating your life so as to gloriously serve your long-term dreams.

freewillastrology@freewillastrology.com
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CROSSWORD

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14				15							16			
17				18							19			
20							21				22			
23				24	25	26				27				
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64					65							66		

FREEGAN’S MENU

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Pitchers of beer?
4 Union led by Richard Trumka
10 ‘80s pop metal one-hit wonders ____ Nova
14 Rizzo on “The Muppets”
15 Breastbones
16 Bottled water brand
17 Entrée on the freegan’s menu?
19 With 56-Across, what all the theme answers are?
20 [“Sigh”]
21 Group that might be assembling C.V.’s: Abbr.
22 Spoken
23 Side dish on the freegan’s menu?
27 “So ____”
28 Partake of this puzzle’s theme
29 Reset numbers
30 Wiggle, as a butt?
32 “The Thin Man” star
33 ____ Read
35 “____ hoping!”
37 Side dish on the freegan’s menu?
39 Morning meeting snack
40 One of the Seven Duffs at Duff Gardens
41 Frat.’s neighbor
42 Seasonal produce source: Abbr.
44 Green land?
45 It might be said when your folks go on about their sex lives
48 Win in ____ (breeze to victory)

- 50 Topping on the freegan’s menu?
53 Sports org. with the Kim Perrot Sportsmanship trophy
54 Last year’s three-I
55 Make
56 See 19-Across
57 Dessert on the freegan’s menu?
61 Business memo’s heading
62 See 33-Down
63 Previous Apple platform
64 Off-shed item
65 Shells and elbows
66 Arm band?

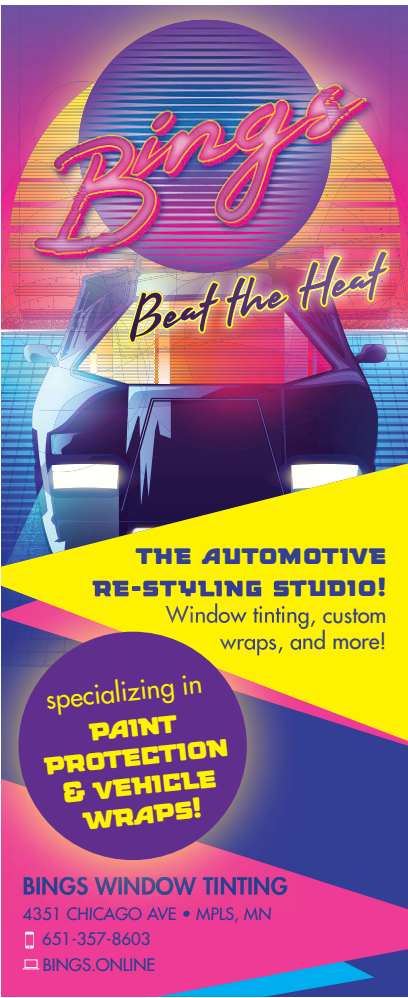
Down

- 1 Asteroids home
2 Showy violet
3 Murdoch of Belle and Sebastian
4 “Fire away”
5 Charity stripe shots: Abbr.
6 Allow
7 Gradual increase, in mus.
8 How Russia ranks #1
9 Common golf course trees
10 Pear variety
11 Given a wreath
12 Whizzes
13 Big name in sunglasses
18 Oklahoma City setting: Abbr.
24 Taunt to the visiting team
25 Some Comedy Central specials
26 Actress Skye

- 27 Beat but good
31 One with something for everybody
33 With 62-Across, “Cocoon” Oscar winner
34 Time keepers?: Abbr.
36 Singer LaMontagne
37 Afghanistan caves where the Taliban is suspected to be based
38 Star Trek captain Hikaru
39 At a disadvantage heading into the second game of a series
41 Deemed appropriate
43 Breathing disorder
45 Steeper
46 Supermodel Miller
47 “My turn”
49 Dockworker, at times
51 Midwestern Indians
52 King of Spain
54 Job order
58 National Sarcastic Awareness Mo. (duh!)
59 Big inits in loans
60 Bassist Claypool

Last Week’s Answer

A	C	M	E		S	H	A	W		S	C	A	M
L	O	O	T		T	O	R	I		P	E	A	C
E	P	I	C		R	O	C	K		E	A	R	N
					S	H	E	A	T	H	I	N	G
O	D	E		D	N	A			O	B	I		
H	U	S	H	E	D	T	H	E	F	O	R	C	E
A	L	A	I	N		I	L	E	X		O	M	G
R	U	L	E		A	N	G	I	E		A	M	I
E	T	O		O	T	O	H			A	R	E	N
	H	U	N	H	A	M	B	A	S	S	A	D	O
			A	O	L		P	T	A		Y	R	S
H	E	A	T	H	L	I	K	E	A	P	I	G	
O	R	T	H	O		C	A	M	P		P	O	S
M	I	C	A	H		O	R	A	L		A	L	P
E	C	O	N			N	O	N	E		D	D	A



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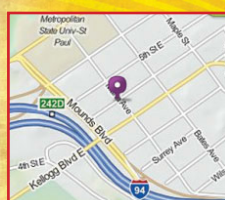


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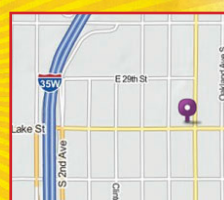
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Open and Shut

My husband is great, but I'm sexually unfulfilled. What do I do?



Dan Savage

My husband and I got married in August 2019 after over five years together. I'm very happy and love him with all my heart. We don't fight, we just have some tiffs here and there. But I have a tough time feeling him during sex and he doesn't last as long as I'd like. We're adventurous enough to try different things, i.e. toys and different positions, but I find myself unfulfilled. He also has not once gone down on me. I'm finding myself attracted to and fantasizing about other men. In addition to being honest with my husband, I don't know what the solution is. I'm not opposed to opening up the marriage but I worry that I'm just being selfish and that it's too soon to try or even discuss it at any length. I did bring up a crush I have on a co-worker and my husband said, "There's nothing wrong with having a snack." What did he mean by that? Do you have any insights?

MARRIED NOT DEAD

I shared your letter with Tristan Taormino, author of *Opening Up: A Guide to Creating and Sustaining Open Relationships*. But before we dive into your situation, MND, there's something Taormino and I want to make clear to all.

"In this time of a global pandemic, thinking and talking about non-monogamy is all you can do," said Taormino. "This goes for everyone: no new sex partners until public health experts say we can go back to standing closer than six feet apart. Even then, we're going to have to proceed with caution." The woman who wrote the book on open relationships says open and poly relationships are canceled for the time being.

While COVID-19 isn't classified as a sexually transmitted infection (STI), having sex with someone who has coronavirus would almost certainly result in transmission. And since people who get infected typically don't show symptoms for up to two weeks, the fact that someone appears to be healthy doesn't mean they are corona-free. So for the time being we should only be having sex with a sex partner we live with. (Luckily sext messages and dirty video chats are both allowed and encouraged, kids.)

With that out of the way, MND, we're going to answer your question, but some of our advice won't be actionable until after

COVID-19 is brought under control.

"I'm glad MND is being honest with her husband about her desires, but let's take that further with even more specific talk about what's missing in her sex life," said Taormino. "In her letter, I heard: pussy eating, intense enough sensation from intercourse, and longer sex sessions. I'll translate that: She's missing pleasure, reciprocation, and orgasms. She is NOT being selfish for wanting these things. They are pretty fundamental aspects of a sexual relationship."

If you asked for my advice five years ago, MND, I would've told you to dump him. Since you chose not to break up over the lack cunnilingus then and you don't want a divorce now, it seems going without oral is the price you're willing to pay.

As for your other issues about sex with your husband, the right toys could help. If your husband ruled out penetration toys that were bigger than his cock, or if you didn't order any that were bigger than his cock to avoid hurting his feelings, you're gonna have to broach the subject of buying some larger toys. Try alternating between toys and his cock during PIV, which will make both the sex and the husband last longer.

"If MND's husband is really in this relationship, he should be open and willing to give most anything a try," said Taormino.

As for opening up the relationship, I wouldn't advise most people initiate that convo at this moment. If it goes badly, that could mean sheltering in place with an angry person. But based on your husband's reaction when you confessed having a crush, I think you could risk it.

But you need to work with your husband on improving your sex life at home before you make plans to open up the relationship and start getting your pussy eaten elsewhere.

"Exploring non-monogamy is one way to address sexual incompatibilities and expand our capacity for love and intimacy," said Taormino. "But the stuff between the two of them needs to get talked about first."

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